Bernal Journal

DECEMBER ISSUE VOL. 15 NO. 6 COPYRIGHT 1978

VISTA Volunteers are: (top, l to r) B. Dutra, C. Martinez, A. Hickey, and (bottom, l to r) L. Walsh, M. Basurto, M. Kadrey and P. Polatsch.

BERNAL WELCOMES VISTA VOLUNTEERS

by Buck Bagot

Seven Bernal Heights residents began training Dec. 5 to become Vista Volunteers.

VISTA or Volunteers in Service to America,is a part of ACTION, a federal program which also includes the Peace Corps. Volunteers help neighborhoods organize to receive services they need and deserve. VISTA workers will be paid roughly $4000 a year.

Bernal Volunteers and their sponsoring organizations are:

--Penny Polatsch of Prospect St., and Charlene Martinez of Elsie St. who will both be working with the Norhtwest Bernal Block Club. Their work will include anti-speculation activity, planning and land acquisition for community development of housing, open space, and parks and recreation.

--Bob Dutra of Holladay Ave. will be with the Mullen-Holladay Group on the East Slope of Bernal Heights. His primary work will be the completion of the East Slope Study, and eventually implementing it.

--Linda Walsh of the Haight will be with the Bernal Heights Re-Cycling Center. She will be working center. She will be working with the WEBBEV Block Club to organize the center.

--Marie Basurto of Wool St. and Anne Hickey of Bronte St. will be with St. Kevin's Church. Their main focus will be pre-school programs, seniors and retirement clubs, and activities relating to families.

--Muniere Kadrie of Moultrie St. will be with the Community Board, involving panel members and residents.

CHURCH LEADERS

by Joanne Molloy

Inside Victory Temple Church on busy Cortland St., the atmosphere was warm and friendly. Tambourines and cardboard fans bearing pictures of Martin Luther King lay in the pews. The light orange walls of what was once the Capricorn Theater were bare of religious ornament.

The congregation prayed aloud, slowing up their pace so the children could keep up. Sister Ruthie LaBrielle remarked from the pulpit that all the children in the church had high reading levels because of their weekly Bible classes. Young and old church members beamed with pride.

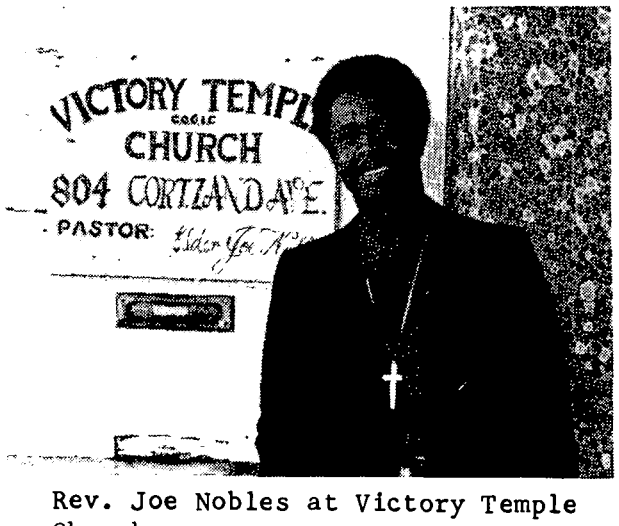
"We're a family here." she said.

Victory Temple, a Church of God in Christ, teaches the "full gospel" according to the Pentecostal faith. Rev. Joe Nobles is pastor, with 60 adult members and their children in the congregation. He himself is father of five and works full-time as a longshoreman. (He works unsalaried as a pastor.) Raised in the Haight-Fillmore neighborhood, Nobles' community work includes starting a reading program in the Western Addition and a childcare and hot lunch program in the Bayview District. With this experience he feels prepared to be able to help church members with their problems.

"Well, I try to meet my people's needs." he said. "If parents come to me with a problem with their child, I will talk to that young person in a way so as not to embarass him or her. And if the problem started outside the family, like in school, I will go down to speak with the counselor or teacher about it."

Pastor Nobles has also worked to find jobs for congregation members, and to help them hold onto them. He remarked with pride that almost every adult in Victory Temple had a job, and those that didn't were looking for work.

"I tell them, if you try, I'll go to Hell with you and back."



Rev. Joe Nobles at Victory Temple Church.

(continued on back page)

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BERNAL JOURNAL

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The Bernal Journal is an open forum of the community sponsored by the Bernal Fund. It is dedicated to providing the people of Bernal Heights with neighborhood news, ideas, issues and events. Articles with by-lines express the views of the individual writer.

The next meeting of the Bernal Journal is Wednesday January 17 at 8 pm at 62 Winfield Street. Anybody with an idea or interest is invited.

EDITORS: Steve Chapple and Ann Kyle
STAFF REPORTER: Joanne Molloy
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Send all letters and articles to 196 Bocana, or call 824-2398 or 648-2809

For information regarding advertising call Joy Ricciardi at 826-2371 or 546-2682

The Bernal Journal needs volunteers to help type and lay out the paper. Layout Night is fun. The company's good. Free coffee and cold icewater, too. Call up and come over.

Quote of the Issue

(Upon hearing of increased security at City Hall):
"This is a real case of locking the barndoor after the horse has been stolen." (Lil Kruse, Folsom)

LETTERS

Dear BJ,

I just finished reading the Bernal Journal--and enjoyed it very much, especially Bernal Heights "Natural History" by Barbara M. Pitschel. I've been wondering about fennel for sometime. Also the weeds--I didn't know you could eat the stalks but have a wide friendship in Italian people so knew about it a little as "Anise." It is used in baking breads.

Also enjoyed the story by Joanne Molloy of the 1906 Earthquake.

I'll be seeing more of you I hope.

Your Friend,
Myra Montana

EDITORIAL

In the tragic assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk San Francisco and Bernal Heights have lost two fighters for the cause of the neighborhoods.

Bernal Heights residents voted overwhelmingly for Mayor Moscone in 1975. This November, 76% of them voted against Proposition 6, the anti-gay Briggs Initiative which Supervisor Milk campaigned so strongly against. Mayor Moscone spent part of his childhood on Virginia Street, and in the past two years he responded to neighborhood groups fighting speculators on Elsie and Mullen-Holladay Streets. It would be naive to think the Mayor would have treated Bernal groups so carefully if they had not organized a good part of the Hill to their cause, but earlier Mayors and several current Supervisors who favor real estate interests over home-owners and renters would have only sat in City Hall and thumbed their noses at us. Thank you, Mayor Moscone.

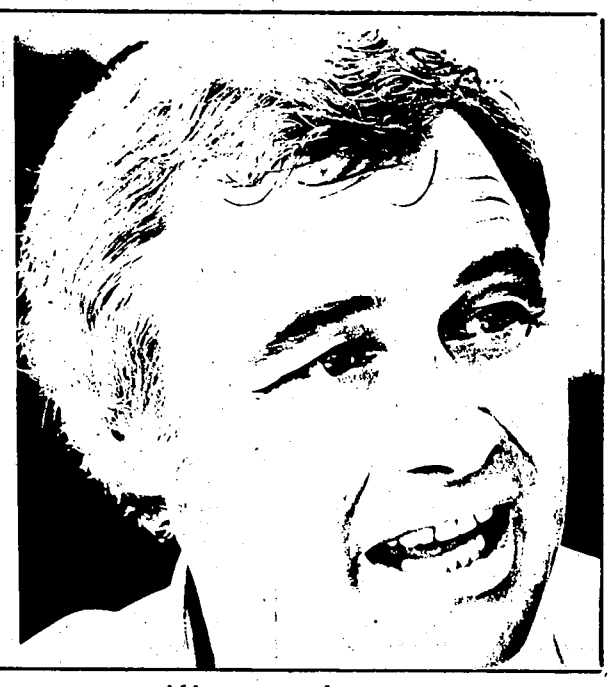
When Walter Cronkite signed off yet another first segment on San Francisco after the murders and the continuing news of the Guyanese suicides he shook his head and said: "San Francisco, a city which has always been eccentric, this week it went insane." We worry about this attitude, the fact that our city is "Land's End" for a lot of lost Americans. But we wonder: would other cities have had the sense of community and openness to elect Mayor Moscone and Mr. Milk in the first place? Where else would 30,000 people turn out in a spontaneous funeral march?

Perhaps more strongly than other Americans, San Franciscans have a firmer feeling for their own destiny, of pitching in, helping out, organizing for what is right. Usually they make their politics heard with force but without violence which is how it should be.

As much, then, as former Supervisor Dan White betrayed himself and the trust of those who elected him, he also betrayed San Francisco with his murderous violence. And we think a few things are being left unsaid by the rest of the media.

If Mr. White was not afraid of homosexuality, if he didn't hate gays, why did he shoot Harvey Milk and not another Supervisor? (Even withstanding that Mr. Milk opposed Mr. White's reappointment.) If Dan White was such a paradoxically "normal guy," why did he carry a .38 with dumdum bullets? Why did he leave the San Francisco police force? Did his private, "Taxidriver" version of law'n'order lead him to rough up suspects? What does his file say? What sort of "normal guy" never cries, never gets mad? We don't know. Maybe the "normal guys" who are wearing "Free Dan White" T-shirts when they're not on duty, disgracing San Francisco and its police force too--maybe they know. We don't. But we'd like to. So we can change the definition of normal.

We would like to dedicate this issue of the Bernal Journal to the memory of George Moscone and Harvey Milk and the issues they stood for.


GEORGE R. MOSCONE

Harvey Milk was only one year younger than George Moscone, yet their political styles spoke of two different generations. Harvey thought of himself as a street person It was this self image as much as his committment to progressive social change that connected him to the struggles of the 60's and early 70's and caused many of us to identify with him. Even though we sometimes differed we could always say,"He is one of us."

He once said that we could be ignorant of the issues and still run for office because we could always educate ourselves, but we could not be ignorant of our true motivation for entering public life. That we must know, for from that, our commit ment and direction would come.

"What motivates you?" I aksed

He said it was the agony of his youth as a homosexual, the hatred, fear and oppression which he and others have been forced to live with. "If I can help even one homosexual teenager to accept him or herself, to have pride and hope of living a full life, I will have acchieved what I have set out to do."

That he even ran at all showed his great bravery. That he finally won showed his skill and intelligence, not to mention his terrific sense of humor through four campaigns. That he served so well is testament to his generous heart and committment.

Beginning next issue, in February, the Journal will give readers a chance to ask questions of District 9's Supervisor, Mr. Lee Dolson. Deadline: for questions is Jan. 5. One to a customer, please. A special thanks to Mr. Dolson for participating.

BERNAL BEES

by Joanne Molloy

Tom Ballinger stood at arm's length from approximately 12,000 bees, smiling calmly. Ballinger has been a beekeeper on Bernal Heights for four years.

"Bernal Heights is the best place in the City for beekeeping." he said. "The vegetation is lush and the weather is spectacularly good. The bees can forage all year round."

In the warmer spring months the population of his five hand-built hives swells to 25,000 bees. What do the neighbors think?

"Well, that can be a problem -- but you have to get together and keep talking. My nextdoor neighbors are my best customers now. They prefer my honey over commercial honey because of its nutritional value."

Ballinger is one of the few beekeepers in San Francisco who has a surplus of honey to sell. Each hive yields about 100 pounds of honey a year, which makes "just enough to pay some bills." The secret of his success is the fact that the hives are right in his backyard, a sunny spot with a garden and a eucalyptus tree. He can watch over their activities daily. Less fortunate beekeepers living in the City usually have to travel to their hives and can't maintain them as carefully.

Tom Ballinger, Bernal's keeper of the bees, holds a homemade honeycomb. The Queen bee has laid eggs in the dark area.

He actually opens up the hives only about three times a year.

"When I first started out, I went in to check them every other week. But with practice, I can tell what's going on inside by their activities outside the hive."

To the untrained eye, the bees swarming around the hives didn't seem to be doing anything in particular. What kinds of things does he look for?

"Well, right now I can see little colored sacks on the bees entering the hive. That's pollen they're carrying, which means they've got a brood of young in there to feed. It's a sign of a healthy hive."

Using a see-through "demonstration hive" reminiscent of an ant farm, Ballinger explained what the bees inside were doing. Hundreds crawled over and inside the wax honeycomb encased in Plexiglas.

"The light-colored cells are where they've stored their honey. The darker cells hold the young of the Queen Bee."

The inhabitants of the demo-hive earned their reputation as "busy bees," regurgitating honey into cells and sealing it over with wax, or placing pollen in the brood cells. They soon headed out to forage for some more nectar and pollen. The workers of bee society are all females -- the males' (or drones') main work being "to wait for a virgin Queen to fly by."

Ballinger, talking energetically, seemed to know all there is to know about bees. Does one have to be an expert to be a beekeeper? Tom Ballinger is encouraging. The local beekeepers group of which he is a member will be glad to help anyone find a swarm and give advice on how to capture it. $45 will buy your basic beekeeper's outfit, which includes a hive, bee veil, gloves, and hive tool. If you have access to a yard on Bernal Heights you're halfway there. With a little practice, you're in "bees-iness!"

Tom Ballinger would be glad to talk about bees or beekeeping to anyone. His number is 824-1547.

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DESIGN CENTER

by R.J. Dutra

The Community Design Center's young and talented Bernal Heights team is winding up its six months of investigations and surveys of the east slope.

An amazing amount of data has been gathered, much of it from hundreds of private interviews and dozens of public meetings. This data is now being collected into various issue-oriented work papers which are then distributed to interested community members.

These task forces then select priorities and make suggestions on ways to deal with local concerns.

A hill-wide open space proposal, new legislation governing development on unimproved streets, a preliminary Community Development budget, and a trial system of neighborhood notification of new construction have already emerged from the CDC study.

Suggestions for improved traffic circulation and control, better access and parking, pedestrian and public transportation recommendations, and even new street alignments are forthcoming.

Guidelines concerning the rehabilitation of existing housing and the compatability of new construction are presently being discussed.

Another task force will concentrate on community safety programs and improved City services.

While the CDC Study was requested by the Mullen-Holladay Group and then approved by the S.F. Planning Commission, it has grown beyond its original scope.

Although the Mullen-Holladay Group represents a small section of the east slope, it is a section with many problems and continues to require a large amount of assistance from the CDC.

The Design Center staff has encouraged the participation of a large number of the unorganized, non-meeting attending, and usually silent residents. Owners and developers of the 250 vacant east slope lots are also being surveyed, along with a wide range of local leaders.

While the Study itself is proceeding according to schedule, guaranteeing adequate time for the community to absorb all the information and agree upon an improvement plan may require more time then expected.

Anyone wishing further information concerning the study or the opportunity to influence its recomendations is welcome to call the Design Center at 863-3718.

BURNED OUT

The Bernal Heights family which lost it home and possessions in the fire that destroyed 424 Holladay Avenue last October 19 has been unable to find a new home to rent.

Real estate agents advise people to expect to pay $100 per room. For the seven member family which was burned out that means a rent of $400 to $500-double their previous rent.

Moderate priced housing is disappearing in San Francisco, and families such as this one are faced with moving into public housing or leaving the city.

No relief from rising real estate costs is expected. Families and individuals will continue to be priced out of their neighborhoods and out of San Francisco.

Dec. 12: Grand Opening for new community room of Bernal Heights library. At the Library:
Tues. Dec. 19, 11am, kids movies, ages 3-6, "The Little Engine That Could, "Christmas Fantasy," "Sleeping Beauty." At 2pm and 4, movies for ages 7-14: "Snowbound" (a gripping movie about two kids lost in the snow), "Brake Free" (a winter train adventure), "Zlateh the Goat" (a boy and his pet lost in a storm) Happy Holidays from BH Library staff: Mattie, John, Melvin, Lynda, Sergio, and Ruth.

BHA news

by Rex Coultas

We are sad to note the passing of our beloved mayor, the late George R. Moscone, as well as Supervisor Harvey Milk of the 5th District. At our September meeting Mayor Moscone explained the impact of Prop 13 on Bernal Heights and was well received by all. Both he and Supervisor Milk will be sorely missed as their contributions to our city were enormous and neither will be easily replaced.

Meanwhile I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you all my best wishes for the holiday season.

BHA meeting

The December 5 meeting of the Bernal Heights Association was canceled because of tragedies behind us and the holidays before us.

We will hold a meeting on January 9 at 8 pm at the Bernal Heights branch of the Library, 500 Cortland Avenue. This will be our first meeting here and we hope you will all come to see if it pleases everyone. We will then try to hold meetings in the same place. Where needed, rides will be furnished. For rides you may contact Lill Kruse at 282-4598.

Ruth McGinnis, Bernal Heights librarian, will be present to explain access to their new accomodations.

Supervisor Lee Dolson and a representative from Postmaster Lee's office will speak. To add agenda items, please call Rex at 648-5783.

Mon. Jan. 8, 10pm, Channel 9 will present an hour-long special on housing speculation in San Francisco entitled "No Room at the Inn." Bernal Heights residents Jeanne Hamer and Buck Bagot are part of the show.

****

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ELSIE NEIGHBORS HIT THE ROAD

Developer Richard Alvarez has come up with a new street plan for Elsie St. in an effort to jam through his proposed buildings. His plan, involving a net loss of parking and virtually no sidewalks, would create a danger to the lives and property of Bernal Heights residents. The Northwest Bernal Block Club (NWBBC) is mobilizing for a neighborhood-wide opposition, and the institution of a safe street plan for Elsie St.

In passing the Elsie St. Plan in July, 1977, the City Planning Commission ruled, over the objections of Mr. Alvarez, that the street on the 100 Block of Elsie St. must be improved before any new construction could begin. This decision temporarily halted Alvarez's attempt to jam a 275' by 50' wall of expensive new houses on to the downhill side of the street. The neighborhood, through the NWBBC, presented a detailed street improvement plan that had received the approval of over 200 residents, and the backing of the vast majority of 100 Block owners and residents.

After trying to avoid making any street improvements at all, the speculator may have succeeded in forcing a slip-shod, inefficient, and dangerous plan through the Environmental Review section of the Department of City Planning.

Alvarez is backed by the powerful group of corporations headed by Homestead Savings and Loan. In a classic example of what one neighborhood resident termed a City Hall policy of "money talks, nobody walks", the City planners have managed to arrive at their conclusions without any serious examination of the neighborhood alternative plan.

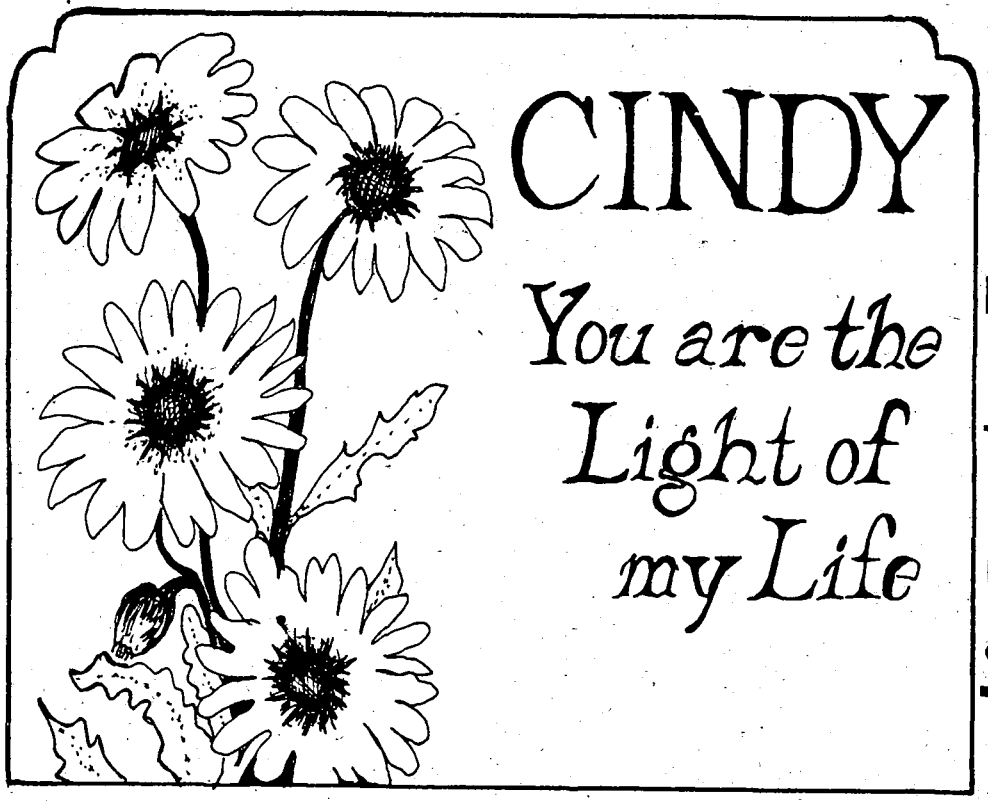
The NWBBC will be appealing the decision to the City Planning Commission. In the past, the Commission has been less susceptible to speculators' pressure than the Department.

Alvarez's street plan is predictably deficient. It's as cheap a job as possible, and one that places his desire to build, profit, and run above the needs of the 100 Block. It constitutes a threat to the lives and property of Bernal Heights residents. It would result in an unweildy, unsafe road if passed. His street plan would result in: 1) Insufficient fire and emergency vehicle access, and unsafe traffic generally, due to a net loss in parking, and the obstruction of vehicular flow caused by the three outcroppings of curb into the street on the up-hill side; 2) severe limitation of lot owners' development possibilities and future expense incurred to improve the street sufficiently and correct Alvarez's mistakes; 3) unsafe pedestrian passage, i.e. only a single two-foot sidewalk for the entire block, with resultant inaccessibility for handicapped and disabled people; and 4) no repair of the currently deteriorated pavemant, including erosion of the street foundation.

The NWBBC is planning an intensive, door-to-door canvas of the Northwest part of the Hill. Plans are being made to hold a Bernal-wide meeting in late January, possibly with other block clubs. The final decision by the City Planning Commission on the street plan for Elsie St. will be made in late January. Your Northwest Bernal neighbors will be seeking your support.

For more information, call 826-3959, or 285-3425.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING ON BERNAL: Friday eve., Dec. 22. Meet at 7:00 pm at St. Kevin's, Cortland & Anderson.



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SKATEBOARDING

EGG NOG

by Jerry Schwartz

Altho a prepared Egg Nog is sold in stores, you will be in for a treat if you make your own. Add rum, brandy or whiskey in order to spruce up your holidays even more.

INGREDIENTS:
2 bowls, 1 egg beater, 6 eggs, 1/2 cup sugar, 2 cups whipping or heavy cream, 2 cups milk, 1/8 tsp. salt, 2 tbls. vanilla extract, freshly grated nutmeg.

1. Separate the 6 eggs--whites in one bowl, yolks in the other.
2. Add salt to the whites and beat a couple minutes till whites are stiff. Put aside.
3. In the other bowl beat the egg yolks till light yellow--about 2 minutes--add the sugar, beat again. Add the milk and heavy cream and vanilla gradually and beat all together approx. 3 to 4 more minutes.
4. Finally, stur in the beaten egg whites to the egg yolk mixture carefully till blended.
5. Refrigerate a while to blend and chill.
6. Sprinkle nutmeg on top.
7. Enjoy!

A Conversation with Lacey Desiree, Age 11
S.A. Dunn, 13
Toni C. Sherbert, 8

Bernal Journal: Tell us about your most fun times on skateboards.
S.A.: Most "Radical Times." That's what you really want to know. "Radical" is when you're doing something you don't usually do and you get a rush.
Journal: Tell us about your most radical skateboard experience, then.

Toni: They were building a new house on our corner. Two stories. And there weren't any windows or doors yet...
Lacey: ...and kids were trying to ride around in there without killing each other first.
Journal: Are there many girl skateboarders?
Lacey: It's harder for girls.
S.A.: The guys say, "Ah ah phoney" and talk about the way you look. There's no respect for it from other people. You have to be twice as good. There's a kind of chicken in you and you have to get over that.
Toni: Yea! 'cause guys get a lot of encouragement!
Journal: What about safety?
S.A.: Safety in skateboarding is as important as anything else, if not more.
Toni: When I get scared is when S.A. can't hear me when I call her about a car coming.
S.A.: But the wind is blowing my hair in my ears, and all I hear is the gravel and the sound of my skateboard, and then I hear this tiny voice and turn around and... there's a car about two feet behind me.

◆◆◆TIPS◆◆◆

Don't skateboard after dark.
Skate with a friend.
Stay on the sidewalks.
Make sure you can see and be seen.
Wear knee pads and elbow pads.
Match your tricks with your skills!

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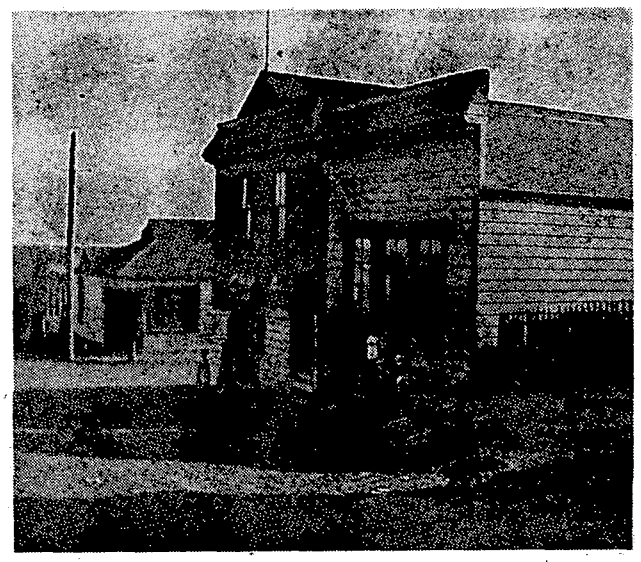

A view of Shields Grocery Store.

A view of Shields Grocery Store. Wool Street looking down towards Cortland. Photo taken 1920. Lenny Sheilds says, "This store used to be just beer. People would come in here with buckets and fill 'em up from kegs. Upstairs was a dance hall. A lady down the street remembers this place from before the fire. So it's at least older than 1906." People who have never been in Shields should go take a look. Beautiful old oak frig and counters. Thanks.....Lenny

◆◆Folsom–Powhattan

By Buck Bagot

Residents near Powhattan Ave. have continued to develop solutions to the problem of unplanned, speculative development in the area. The group feels that a planned building at the corner of Folsom and Powhattan would be a hazard due to the substandard condition of streets and City services in the area. Some controversy exists concerning the status of three permits already issued or soon to be. However, in a meeting with City Planning Director Rai Okamoto Dec. 5, representatives received a committment to Department backing for a neighborhood-run study of the area, similar to the Elsie St. and East Slope Development studies. For more info call 282-2886 or 648-2277.

◆Heights Election Results

by Mike Mason

	Ber. Hghts.	SF	State
Turnout			
Turnout	57%	57%	
		(without absentees)	
Governor Brown-	83%	70%	56%
Younger -	10%	23%	36%
Clark-	4%	5%	6%
Chief Justice			
Rose Bird (yes):	79%	69%	52%
Prop 5 yes	49%	46%	46%
Prop 6 no	76%	75%	58%
Prop 7 no	64%	55%	28%
Prop U yes	55%	47%	
Prop V yes	73%	61%	
Prop W yes	66%	57%	
Prop X yes	60%	56%	

◆Jogging Hassles

The Journal has received several reports that women joggers have been hassled as they ran around the top of Bernal Hill.

Men, singley or in groups, have at times shouted obscenities and come-ons from parked cars. One woman complained that a weirdo did a heavy breathing number each time she finished a lap.

We think this is outrageous. People have a right to exercise unmolested. And we don't want a rape or sexual harrassment on our hill.

If you see anyone bothering a jogger, take down their license plate number, call the police, and inform the Northwest Bernal Block Club at 826-3959.

◆Journal Joke

How many people from Marin County does it take to change a lightbulb?

Twelve.

(One to screw in the bulb, one to "make the space," and ten to share the experience.)

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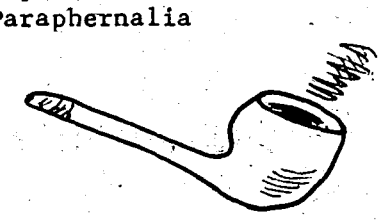

SID'S 'PIPE DREAM

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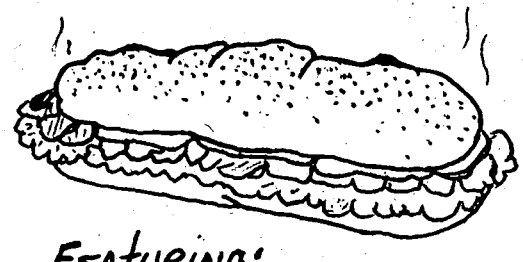

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(cont. from p. 1)

He seemed apologetic about pulling back from working in the community-at-large. With his "blistering schedule" he must concentrate on getting the temple's mortgage paid off. He hoped that would happen sometime next year. The key, he said, to meeting the needs of the community is for all the different churches and community organizations to link up together.
"I think I know the System." Pastor Nobles said, " To get anything done the different groups must join together in full force."

****

Pastor Banks has been a prominent figure in Bernal Heights since 1956, when he and his congregation started Tree of Life Baptist Church. Located at 530 Tompkins, the church also has an apartment where he lives with his wife Sister Banks.
"Years ago when my health was better I was quite active in the community. We helped get trees, stop signs, things like that. But my primary work has always been saving souls. Strengthening the weak, bringing people closer to God -- that's what the church is for."

Rev. Banks at Tree of Life Baptist Church.

Pastor Banks views his leadership role modestly.
"It's not my special view that I preach. I deliver the word of God."
He felt that the strongest needs of his congregation are religious needs. Pastor Banks encourages church members to come close to God in any way they can.
"So many people, no matter what age, are hungry for real truth. They have a right to believe what they want to believe. There are no restrictions."
The Tree of Life congregation enjoys any religious service, Pastor Banks said. He and Sister Banks recalled fondly the times when St. Kevin's Catholic Church would hold joint services with Tree of Life.
"Our separate faiths have a common bond, and the services came out beautifully. I hope to do that again."

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* Watch for the next issue of the Bernal Journal for an interview with Rev. Whiteside of Good Hope Baptist Church on their Anniversary.

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from The Staff of the Bernal Journal